

Arizona Criminal Justice Commission

Criminal Justice Systems Improvement Data Brief



Two-Fingerprint Identification Process in Arizona Courts Pilot Project

Our mission is to sustain and enhance the coordination, cohesiveness, productivity and effectiveness of the criminal justice system in Arizona.

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Mobile Two-Fingerprint Identification in Arizona Courts

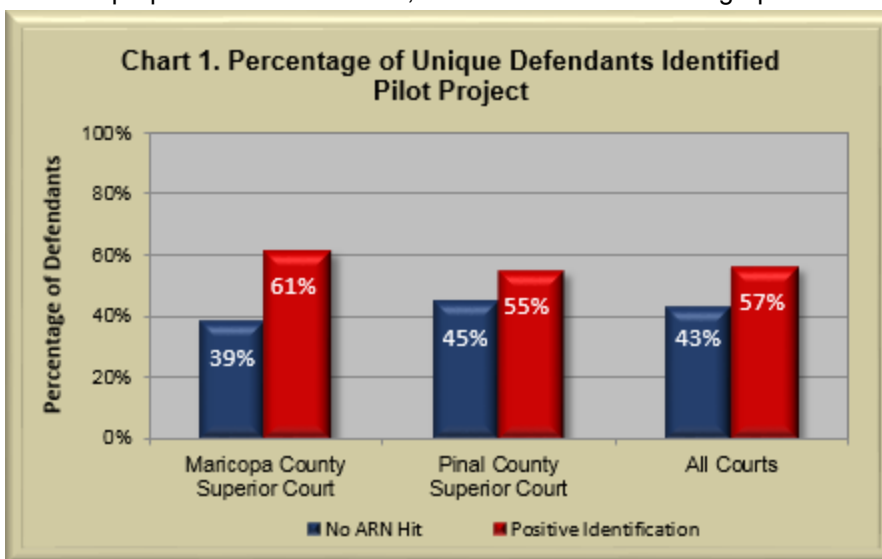
Currently, sentencing order fingerprints are captured manually by courtroom clerks or bailiffs using the "ink & roll" method. The use of mobile two-fingerprint identification devices is expected to enhance the quality of courtroom fingerprinting, determine if valid fingerprints exist in the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS), and provide instantaneous positive identification of defendants who do have fingerprints available in the AFIS. As a result of the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission's (ACJC) strategic assessment report, the ACJC embarked on a pilot project in August 2014. The intent of the project was to use mobile fingerprinting technology to assess improvements in the efficacy of fingerprints captured in the courtroom and to review the impact positive defendant identification has on criminal history record processing.

Maricopa and Pinal County Superior Courts Pilot Project

Over the course of two project phases, the Maricopa County Superior Court (MCSC) and the Pinal County Superior Court (PCSC) tested mobile two-fingerprint identification devices, designed by MorphoTrak and Cross Match, at two court locations. Sets of defendants' two index fingers were scanned for identification purposes. At the MCSC, a total of 88 sets of fingerprints were captured from a total of 70 defendants. A total of 205 sets of fingerprints were taken at the PCSC from 202 defendants. Some defendants were fingerprinted multiple times at the designated court during the course of the pilot study collection period.

When examining defendants fingerprinted across all courts, 57 percent led to a positive AFIS Record Number (ARN) hit on the defendant (Chart 1). The presence of a valid ARN indicates to the court that the individual's fingerprints have been taken due to prior involvement in the criminal justice system or for employment purposes predating their scheduled court appearance. If the result is no ARN hit, then the court is made aware that the individual must be sent for ten-print fingerprinting at a booking facility on the originating arrest charges. At the MCSC, 61 percent of all defendants with fingerprints captured during the collection period had a positive ARN identification.

Defendants' fingerprints captured at the PCSC led to ARN hits 55 percent of the time. During the pilot period, 39 percent of defendants fingerprinted at the MCSC and 45 percent at the PCSC did not return an ARN via the mobile devices. Overall, 43 percent of defendants at both courts did not return an ARN hit during their first court appearance. In other words, 43 percent of the 272 defendants either have no criminal history in the Arizona Computerized Criminal History (ACCH) repository or have no valid fingerprints on file. The identities of these individuals are not able to be verified at the court via ARN.



Phase Comparisons of the Pilot Project

Two, one-week pilot phases were implemented at superior court locations in both counties. During the first phase in April, the PCSC recorded ARN hits 54 percent of the time (Table 1). At the MCSC, 77 percent of fingerprint sets resulted in ARN hits via the mobile devices. During the first phase, both locations resulted in ARN hits 61 percent of the time. During the second phase of the study, 55 percent of fingerprint sets captured at the PCSC resulted in ARN hits. At the MCSC, the ARN hit rate for fingerprint sets came to 43 percent. Overall, 52 percent of fingerprint sets from both locations led to ARN hits. It should be noted that the devices had technical difficulties during the second phase.

Table 1. Percentage of Fingerprint Sets Leading to ARN Hits by Phases Implemented

	Fingerprint Sets Leading to an ARN Hit
Phase One (Four Week Period in April 2015)	61%
Pinal County Superior Court	54%
Maricopa County Superior Court	77%
Phase Two (Four Week Period in June 2015)	52%
Pinal County Superior Court	55%
Maricopa County Superior Court	43%

NOTE: Data in Table 2 does not reflect the efficacy of fingerprinting via the mobile devices. The data only represents the percentage of defendants that were positively identified with an ARN in the Arizona Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AZAFIS).

This data brief was prepared by:

Matt Bileski, Senior Research Analyst
Heather R. Cotter, Waterhole Justice Consulting
Teri Barnes, Programs & Projects Specialist
Arizona Criminal Justice Commission
1110 West Washington, Suite 230
Phoenix, AZ 85007